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OES/SPA - ROBERT C. BREWSTER

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SUBJECT:ANTARCTIC TREATY: BILATERAL US/UK DISCUSSIONS,
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 11, 1977

1. BRITISH ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ROBERT EDMONDS, ACCOMPANIED BY FCO POLAR AFFAIRS OFFICER
JOHN HEAP, VISITED THE DEPARTMENT AT THEIR REQUEST TO
DISCUSS ANTARCTIC TREATY MATTERS, PARTICULARLY PREPARA-

TIONS FOR THE NINTH ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING WHICH THE UK WILL HOST SEPTEMBER 19-OCTOBER 7. FOR THE US, THE TALKS WERE CONDUCTED BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROBERT C. BREWSTER AND OFFICERS OF OES AND L.

2. THE INFORMAL TALKS COVERED THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

A. ANTARCTIC TREATY. THE UK FELT THAT GROWING THIRD WORLD INTERESTS IN ANTARCTIC RESOURCES THREATEN THE TREATY, WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RETAIN IF RESOURCE ISSUES ARE DEALT WITH COMPLETELY OUTSIDE THE TREATY SYSTEM. THE US AGREED WITH THE ANALYSIS.

B. ANTARCTIC FISHERIES. THE UK STRESSED THE URGENCY OF DEALING WITH LIVING RESOURCE QUESTIONS, SINCE EXPLOITATION HAS STARTED, AND THOUGHT THE NINTH CONSULTATIVE MEETING

SHOULD PERHAPS DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO LIVING RATHER THAN MINERAL RESOURCE ISSUES, BECAUSE MINERAL ACTIVITY IN ANTARCTICA IS STILL FAR OFF. THE US SAID IT WOULD PREFER THAT BOTH RESOURCE QUESTIONS BE DEALT WITH IN A TIMELY FASHION. THIS WOULD NOT PRECLUDE EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING OF LIVING RESOURCE QUESTIONS. THE UK THOUGHT THE 12 TREATY CONSULTATIVE PARTIES SHOULD CREATE A SPECIAL FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF LIVING RESOURCE ISSUES, SINCE NOT ALL 12 WOULD NECESSARILY WISH TO PARTICIPATE.

C. ANTARCTIC MINERALS. THE US REITERATED ITS INTEREST IN CONTINUING THE FORWARD MOMENTUM ON THE MINERALS
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QUESTION, FOLLOWING THE PRESENT "TWO-TRACK" APPROACH OF PARALLEL CONSIDERATION, WITHOUT PREJUDICE, OF POLITICAL/ LEGAL AND TECHNICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS. THE UK WONDERED WHETHER CONSULTATIONS AMONG A FEW PARTIES, E.G. THE UK, US, NZ, AND AUSTRALIA, MIGHT NOT EXPEDITE MATTERS. THE US EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS, NOTING THAT WHILE SUCH CONSULTATION MAY HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN PAVING THE WAY FOR THE 1959 ANTARCTIC TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, IT IS NOT TOTALLY RELEVANT TODAY.

D. VENUE OF X CONSULTATIVE MEETING. RESPONDING TO A UK QUERY, THE US INDICATED IT WOULD BE WILLING TO RECOMMEND TO ITS AUTHORITIES THAT THE US HOST THE XTH MEETING IF THE USSR, WHICH SHOULD HOLD IT, IS UNABLE BECAUSE IT HAS NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ONE OR MORE OF THE CONSULTATIVE PARTIES.

E. POLAND'S CONSULTATIVE STATUS. THE US SAID IT WOULD SUPPORT POLAND'S BECOMING A CONSULTATIVE PARTY AND

ADMISSION TO THE NINTH MEETING IF TREATY CRITERIA ARE MET. THE UK SAID ITS LEGAL OPINION ON THE QUESTION TENDS TO BE RESTRICTIVE RATHER THAN EXPANSIVE.

F. CLASSIFICATION OF CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS. THE US INDICATED IT FACES PROBLEMS IN MAINTAINING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOCUMENTS OF CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS SINCE THEY BEAR NO CLASSIFICATION. THE US IS CONSIDERING MAKING A PROPOSAL AT THE NEXT MEETING THAT IN FUTURE ALL CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS WILL BE UNCLASSIFIED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY RESTRICTED BY EACH MEETING.

G. US DELEGATION TO NINTH MEETING. THE US SAID ITS DELEGATION TO THE NINTH MEETING WOULD PROBABLY CONTAIN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC MEMBERS.

3. TALKS WERE FOLLOWED BY WORKING-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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DR. HEAP, AT WHICH HE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. ENVIRONMENT. THE UK MAY PROPOSE THAT THE NINTH MEETING ADOPT AN ENVIRONMENTAL DECLARATION IN ORDER THEREBY TO STRENGTHEN THE ANTARCTIC REGIME OF THE CONSULTATIVE PARTIES. WITH RESPECT TO THE MINERALS QUESTION, THE UK BELIEVES AN APPROPRIATE OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKING PARTY OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS, WHICH MEETS AT THE TIME OF THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING, WOULD BE TO DRAW UP AN OUTLINE FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT THAT COUNTRIES WISHING TO UNDERTAKE MINERALS ACTIVITY IN ANTARCTICA WOULD HAVE TO PREPARE.

B. HYDROMETEOROLOGY. HEAP THOUGHT SOVIET AGENDA ITEM ON THIS SUBJECT FOR THE NINTH MEETING WAS ENTIRELY TOO TECHNICAL AND IS A TIME WASTER. THE UK IS LOOKING INTO WAYS TO SHELVE IT OR DIVERT IT TO ANOTHER FORUM.

C. AIRBUS. HEAP BELIEVED THAT ARGENTINA'S EAGER SUPPORT OF THE COOPERATIVE AIR TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR ANTARCTICA, AFTER YEARS OF DISINTEREST, STEMS FROM A POLITICAL DESIRE TO MAKE ITS NOW IMPROVED AIRFIELD IN ANTARCTICA A NATIONAL PORT OF ENTRY.

D. SCENARIO FOR THE NINTH MEETING. THE UK PLANS TO DEVOTE THE FIRST WEEK OF THE THREE WEEK MEETING (SEPTEMBER 19-OCTOBER 7, 1977) IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FORMAL OPENING, TO THE WORKING PARTY OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS. SIMULTANEOUS MEETINGS ARE NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF LIMITED INTERPRETATION FACILITIES.

4. THE UK REPRESENTATIVE SAID THEY HOPED TO HOLD SIMILAR
BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS BEFORE THE
MARCH 14-18 PREPARATORY MEETING. THE US ENCOURAGED THE
UK TO DO SO. THE UK ALSO EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO CONTINUE
THE DISCUSSION WITH THE US IN WASHINGTON BEFORE THE
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PREPARATORY MEETING, WHICH THE US SAID IT WOULD WELCOME.

5. THE TALKS WERE A USEFUL MEANS TO CLARIFY POSITIONS
OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND HELPFUL TO BOTH IN DETERMINING
HOW BEST TO PROCEED WITH PREPARATIONS FOR THE NINTH
CONSULTATIVE MEETING. WHERE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF
VIEW, THEY DO NOT SEEM AT THIS POINT TO POSE ANY REAL
PROBLEMS FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF US POLICY OBJECTIVES.
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